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MEDIA RELEASE

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MISS CLOW: "IT'S OK TO WEAR RED"
BUT DON'T FORGET YOUR WHITE GLOVES

By Virginia Vickers Braun
Office of University Relations
University of Montana

MISSOULA--

Who said proper young ladies should never wear red (it inflames men's passions) or black patent leather shoes (they reflect up a skirt)? A) Miss Emily Post B) Miss Manners C) Miss Maurine Clow?

If you attended the University of Montana between 1947 and 1973, you'd probably answer C) Miss Clow. Of course you'd also be wrong.

"I never said any such thing," she said, obviously chagrined and amused. Smartly dressed in a bright red suit, her stunning white hair perfectly coiffed and her nails beautifully manicured, Miss Clow is nevertheless a very proper lady. As it turns out, red is her favorite color and even though she delights in wearing patent leather, the myth won't die.

Like it or not, as dean of women from 1947 until her retirement in 1973, Miss Clow is a living legend. For 26 years she "held the line" and set high standards for social behavior at UM.

As recently as 15 years ago, campus life was radically different for women. Any student who missed a class was required to see the dean and to have a reasonable excuse. Freshmen women were required to be in their dorms by 10:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and by 1 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Upperclass women could be out until 11 p.m. on Sundays. Coming in late

(over)

Miss Clow--add one

resulted in getting "campused," or grounded for a specified number of nights. Men had no hours and virtually no regulations.

For many years there was a dress code on campus. "It used to be you couldn't wear jeans except to go to or from a sorority house to do house duties," Miss Clow said. Women were required to wear dresses or skirts for meals. One way to evade this rule was to wear a coat with pants or pajamas rolled up underneath.

Although the dress code for students began to change in the mid-'60s, it didn't change for faculty and staff members until 1970. In the fall of that year, the dean of students refused to give Miss Clow's assistant permission to wear a Pendelton pants suit. After Christmas break, Miss Clow returned wearing, "in all my glory," a pants suit and a blond curly wig. "He (the dean) didn't know what to do with me after that," Miss Clow said. But afterwards, pants suits were allowed on campus.

The task of enforcing rules of conduct fell largely on Dean Clow. "I never performed a disciplinary act as a penalty. Never. I tried to figure out what would help a student do better things in similar circumstances," she said.

In addition to discipline problems, Miss Clow was responsible for providing academic counseling for all students who received "pink slips," or failing grades. She was responsible for the welfare of all the women students on campus and served as adviser to numerous women's organizations. She also was supervisor of the women's residence halls and coordinator of the University's social programs.

On weekends she chaperoned student dances at the Florence Hotel or the Club Chateau. "I danced at every dance until my heart got too bad," she said.

(more)

Miss Clow--add two

One of her ex-officio duties was to take charge of the Miss Montana pageant held at, but not sponsored by, the University. "I had just gotten my Ph.D. in psychology from Stanford University, and I wasn't interested in doing this," she said. "My only justification was that if we could tie in a whole program that was of value to all the girls, then it might have some merit."

The result was developing a whole social program that included lectures on personal grooming, good manners and proper etiquette. The women were taught hair care, make-up, grace, posture, walking, voice, diction and how to be interviewed. They were taught how to be a hostess and greet people and how to properly set a table and use the right fork.

Miss Clow became convinced of the value of the Miss Montana pageant after seeing how the experience affected the winners. The first Miss Montana she took to Atlantic City was a C student. Although she didn't win the Miss America pageant, she got straight As after returning to UM. According to Miss Clow, the experience had given the girl confidence in herself.

In the nine years she helped run the Miss America Pageant, only one Miss Montana, Joanna Lester in 1963, made it to the Miss America finals.

Many of the former students Miss Clow counseled have kept in contact over the years. Some who got into the worst scrapes have become close personal friends. One young woman was thrown out of school because she eloped. Later on, after the couple was divorced, she returned to school and is now a well-known Canadian journalist.

Another time a young man voluntarily surrendered himself to Miss Clow after delivering a group of visiting high school seniors back to the dorms at 5 a.m. The incident could have cost him a scholarship to a prestigious military academy but Miss Clow let the matter drop. Then, while he was at the academy, a group of cadets got into trouble for hazing and were dismissed. But the young man, remembering his talk with Miss Clow, refused to take part.

(over)

Miss Clow--add three

Later, as a practicing lawyer, he chanced to meet Miss Clow and told her he owed her a special obligation and that for years she had been the most important woman in his life.

In a recent article in the San Francisco Examiner, Dr. Konnilyn Feig, class of '58, who is now dean of University/Strategic Planning at San Francisco State University and a leading authority on the Holocaust, attributed the turning point in her academic career to Miss Clow.

While a junior at UM, she was working at two jobs to put herself through school and, as a result, her grades suffered. Miss Clow mentioned her plight and the plight of many other women forced to withdraw from school due to hard economic times, to a friend, Mrs. George Fox. That Christmas Mrs. Fox gave Miss Clow a check for \$900 to use as she saw fit. Konnilyn received the first Fox scholarship and was able to devote full time to her studies.

Mrs. Fox, who died in 1968, bequeathed a \$ $\frac{1}{2}$ million trust to UM for scholarships, five-eighths to go to women and three-eighths to go to men.

Another woman, Harriet Miller, got her first job from Miss Clow. She was hired as head resident of Brantly Hall for \$75 a month. Later on, she was elected state superintendent of public instruction and became Miss Clow's boss.

Although she's been retired for almost 10 years, Miss Clow is still regarded by former students as a leading authority on etiquette. A few years ago she received a call in the middle of the night from a finalist for a White House Fellowship asking if she should remove her gloves to shake hands with the President. And, during Homecoming last year, she was besieged by a group of Alpha Phis who had come to honor Distinguished Alumna Award recipient Wini Jones. "I would have come over sooner," one of the women told Miss Clow, "but I didn't have my white gloves on."

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